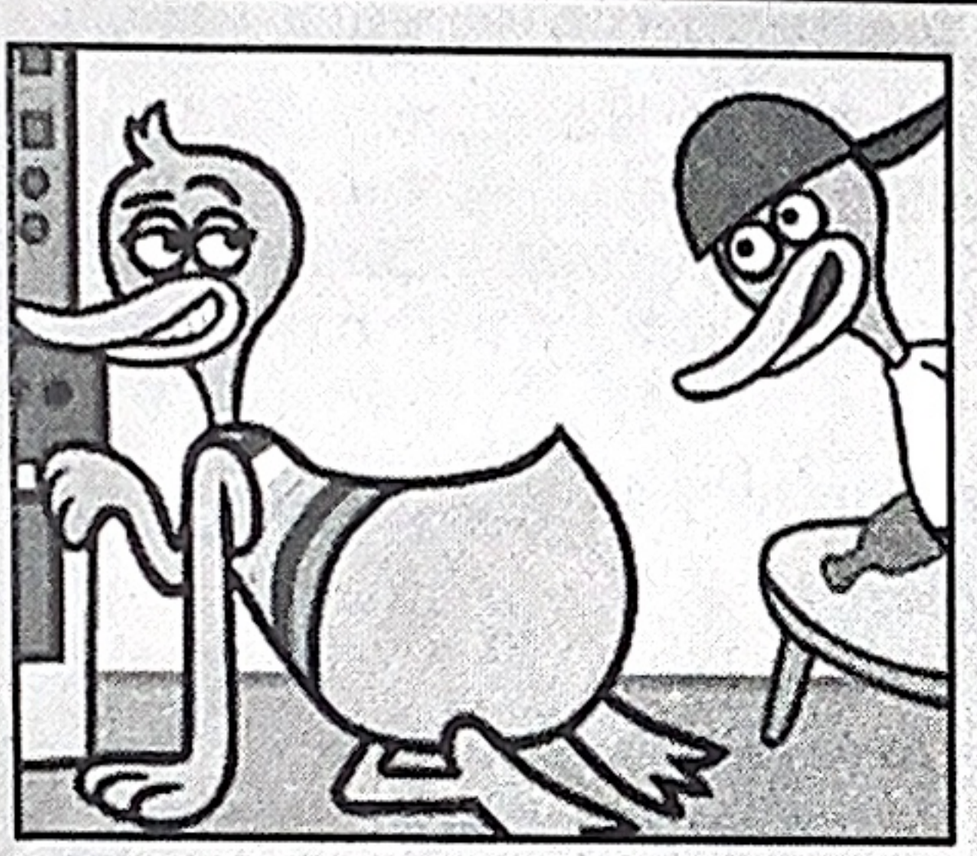
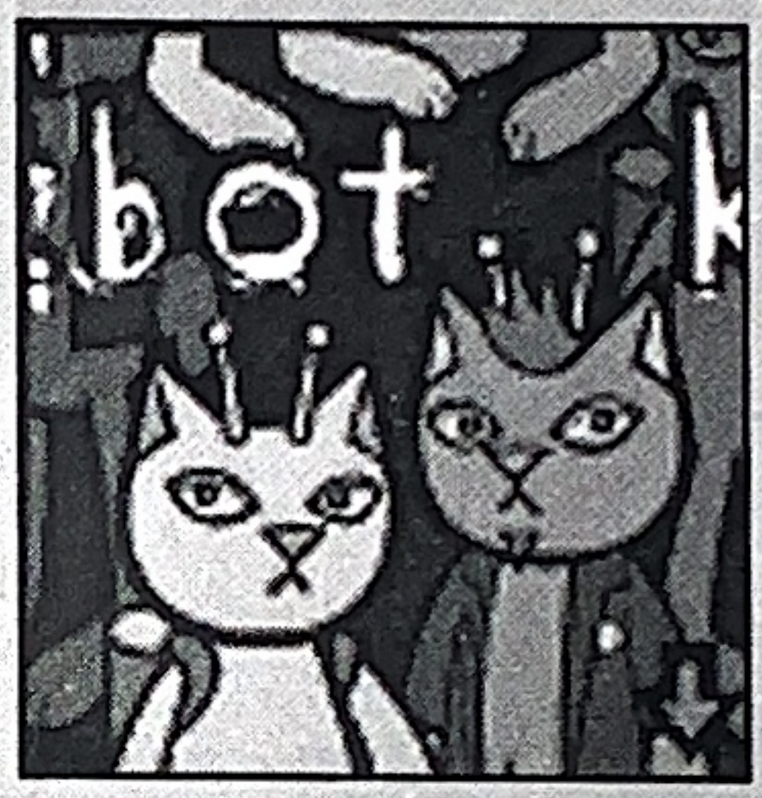
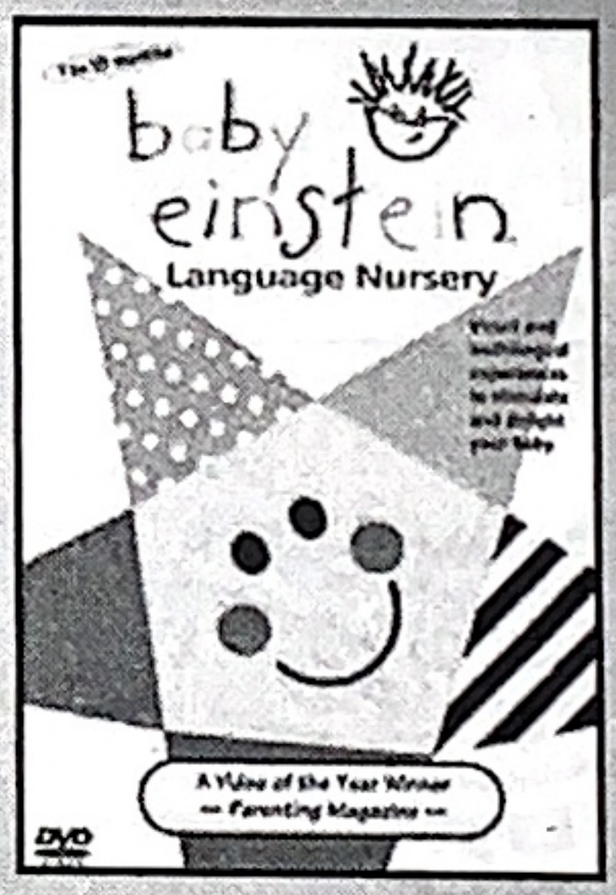
ASIFA East • The International Animated Film Society

aNYmator

November 2004







ASIFA East Presents
A Flash TV Production Panel discussion
Wednesday, November 17 at 7:00 p.m. - SVA

See Back Cover For Details

ASIFA East is proud to announce the return of our website www.asifaeast.com

ASIFA-EAST

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ASIFA East

The International Animated Film Society Northeast /New York Chapter
A Program of the New York Foundation For The Arts

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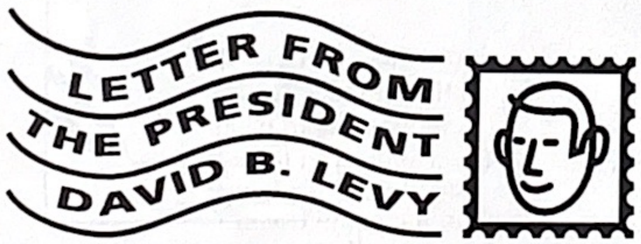


ASIFA-East This & That

From time to time I like to use this space to spread a little information about this ASIFA chapter. Toward that end, here are some frequently asked questions and some topics for discussion:

1) How do you find the ideas for the monthly events? (This question has been asked most often by ASIFA chapters just starting up).

A: On the board of directors, we constantly keep our eyes and ears open for event possibilities. Most of them we initiate, such as the evening with "*Yellow Submarine*" producer Al Brodax in September. In that case, I had read Brodax's new book, *Up Periscope Yellow* and then did an Internet search to contact his publisher, Limelight Editions. We were lucky that Brodax was in the midst of a U.S. book tour, so it was relatively easy to set up the event. Our annual events include the Open Screening (last month's event!) and the judging nights that precede the festival. Often, trends in the industry present ideas for events, such as this month's event, the Flash TV production panel. Flash has been making a splash

in NYC as more and more TV series are being animated in-house using the software. It seemed natural to put together a panel night to acknowledge this development.

Fortunately, we've been the go-to place when big name animation artists pass through town. In the last four years, we've presented unforgettable evenings with masters Yuri Norstein, Richard Williams, and Ray Harryhausen. Still, we count on you, the members, to supply us with suggestions for screenings and events. Please send your suggestions to me at *dbl1973@earthlink.net* and I'll be glad to take credit for them.

2) Why don't you charge an admission fee at the events?

A: By principle, our events are always open to the public. We encourage all ASIFA-East members to bring along friends, potential members and circus animals. We love to see a packed house! Perhaps more importantly, the School Of Visual Arts loans us their space, equipment and projectionists for free. In turn, SVA students have helped to fill our audiences and ASIFA-East has provided to them a conduit to the industry. Besides, ASIFA-East already has means of raising revenue with membership dues, fundraising activies, and the annual film festival. We don't insist that one be a member to attend our monthly screenings/events. We know that most of our members today started by checking out an event or two. If all else fails, we've been dabbling in the dark arts of mind control.

3) The newsletter.

The question five years ago would have been, where did the newsletter go? There was no newsletter from 1999 to 2000. Our newsletter, aNYmator, has taken a few incarnations over our chapter's 40 years. It's been a one-page flyer publicizing the event of the month and sometimes a two-page fold-over with a bare bones of information and the occasional article. In the fall of 2000, the newsletter came back (published every other month) to include editorials, news, interviews, reviews, announcements, and historical pieces. One year ago, Mark Bailey generously stepped up to bring the newsletter back to its monthly status. aNYmator has never looked better!

Feedback is an important way of helping the board know what you're feeling and thinking. We all have critical minds. It's what separates us from the animals (well, that and tight fitting screens). There have always been 100 different opinions as to what the newsletter ought to be. Yet, in criticizing a newsletter that represents you, you have to follow that criticism by answering the questions, "What can I do to help?" and "If I have an idea for the newsletter, how can I get involved?" You've got to be in the game if you want to complain. And you can't collect the $200 until you pass go. Give us a call or send an email.

4) ASIFA-East and the mystery of our Web site:

It's a given that Asifa-East should have a strong Web pressence. Yet, the Web site has proved to be one of our biggest challenges because we've had trouble finding someone with the right skills and desire to stay on the task. Those days are behind us because Xeth Feinberg has stepped up to lend us his time and expertise in creating our best Web site ever. Please visit YOUR ASIFA-East Web site at *www.asifaeast.com*

The Web site's growth is dependent on your feedback and participation. Send us your updates, news and announcements. Help us round up listings of screenings and events happening around town. Send us links to your homepages and other sites our members would be interested in (but, keep it clean!). At the very least, get into the habit of checking the site every couple of weeks. Just make sure you wipe your feet before you step on in.

? Remembering The Great Col-Earase Scare of 2003. Can It Happen Again?

By Mystery Writer (Definately Not The Editor)

Those of you who were out of town or too young to remember this horrific event in NYC animation history are truly blessed. The mere threat of not being able to find our weapon of choice, (a humble yet god-like "Col-Erase" brand erasable pencil) drove some close to the edge of breaking diets, smoking, drinking or worse. We were forced to band together and horde the last of our precious pencils. It was reported that a 2" stub could fetch as much as a carton of cigarettes on the black market. These were the darkest times in this writers life.

Thankfully, it was reported as a "Non Event" and this threat was nothing more than a perception, a most terrifying perception. They say everything is fine, they say supplies have been flowing like the Volga river, they say we have nothing to worry about. Well, all I can ask is "Who Are They"?

I hate to be an alarmist, but I ask you to learn from this tragic event and prepare for the worst. Thanks for your time and God Bless.

"Skip's Pix: Eight Animated Film Shorts by SKIP BATTAGLIA."

Disc contains:

"Boccioni's Bike" (1981)
"Parataxis" (1980)
"How the Frog's Eye Sees"(1984)
"Geologic Time" (1989)
"Restlessness" (1994)
"Taki Dom" (with Julie Ann Jergens, Dan Pejril) 1997)
"Second Nature" (2000)
"More True Shit" (2003).

$26.95
Special Price to ASIFA-East members:

DVD contains complete versions of original films plus artist's commentary versions of all eight films.

Orders payable by check to: Skip Battaglia
105 Meredith Avenue, Rochester, New York 14618.
Or contact: skipb@frontiernet.net www.rit.edu/~cfbpph/

A Chance To Visit With Old Friends

By Michael Sporn

I had a film in competition in the Ottawa Animation Festival so was elated to take the opportunity to go the Festival to enjoy the company of a lot of old friends and to see some great animation.

Though the seminars were oftentimes contentious and, at the very least, spirited, I was enormously gratified to have been able to attend many of them. Our own Steven Dovas instigated and moderated several, while Richard O'Connor and George Griffin also hosted other presentations. More often than not these live interactions were more inspirational than some of the films on display.

A Musical Shop

Things started off disappointingly with a poor opening night of films – well, I shouldn't say "poor". I should just say that they were ordinary. The second night was just the reverse; exciting and brilliant. After that, all the programs were good but not up to that second night. There were stand-out films such as, Chris Landreth's RYAN and a brilliant Russian children's film, A Musical Shop by Sonya Kravtsova.

On the last day of the competition films, I found myself up early and trying to keep quiet while my roommate slept. I watched some Warner Bros. cartoons on TV, muted. They were good ones, especially FEED THE KITTY - that one with the bulldog, Marc Antony, mothering the little kitten. It was pure character animation. As a matter of fact, all of the 1950's Warner cartoons I saw had great character animation.

A Room Nearby

Then I realized what was missing from the shorts at the film festival – character animation. As a matter of fact, only two films I saw really qualified for what I consider good character animation: that Russian film and Paul & Sandra Fierlinger's film, A Room Nearby. This is the same film that premiered in New York at an ASIFA-East program.

For me the film only grew by the time it played in Ottawa. It's a study of loneliness, as reported by several people via their real-life monologues. The style of the film has grown out of Paul's autobiographical animation done in a couple of earlier films. DRAWN FROM LIFE and Still Life With Animated Dogs.

Paul and Sandra Fierlinger are exceptional artists whose work has to be lauded again and again. They continue to make films of depth and intelligence with the most emotionally

complete animation done today. They work on a computer, yet their work looks and feels hand drawn.

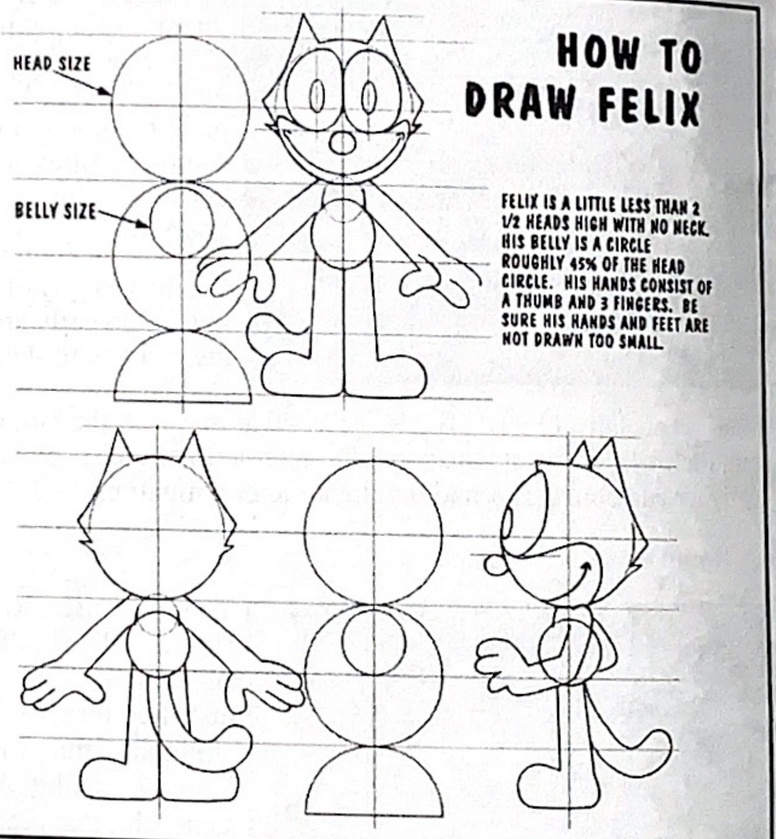
Many of the films at the festival were beautifully designed, but either the stories were insipid or the animation had no depth. The design carried me through many of them, but I realize now that I need more to be satisfied. Without warm, human, character animation, for my taste, there was little more than graphic design on the screen.

In these days of "cgi" this and "flash" that, have we come to accept this as "quality"? It's not animation; it's graphic design. Every once in a while, I have to remind myself that the word "animation" derives from the Latin word "Animus". It doesn't mean "Life"; it means "Soul".

If a film is well animated it has been invested with a soul. A MUSICAL SHOP was only the second film by Sonya Kravtsova. She, certainly, is part of my hope for the future of animation. Paul & Sandra Fierlinger are imbuing their films with humanity – they have a "soul". They are masters.

ASIFA-East Presents:

Drawing Time


HOW TO DRAW FELIX
HEAD SIZE
BELLY SIZE
FELIX IS A LITTLE LESS THAN 2 1/2 HEADS HIGH WITH NO NECK. HIS BELLY IS A CIRCLE ROUGHLY 45% OF THE HEAD CIRCLE. HIS HANDS CONSIST OF A THUMB AND 3 FINGERS. BE SURE HIS HANDS AND FEET ARE NOT DRAWN TOO SMALL.

www.asifaeast.com
Check It Out

ASIFA-EAST

The Nina Paley Show!

Sunday November 7, 7:00 pm (sharp!)
Two Boots Pioneer Theater, 155 E. 3rd St. (at Ave. A), New York City
Admission $9
Animation Galore!

Featuring "Fetch!" and "Pandorama" in glorious 35mm!

Plus: The Sitayana, The Stork, The Wit & Wisdom of Cancer, Fertco, Lexi, and the 1997 "I Want to Join a Suicide Cult" episode of "The Jerry Springer Show" featuring Nina in pancake makeup, a wig, and a dominatrix outfit advocating cannibalism and sodomy with the Church of Euthanasia.

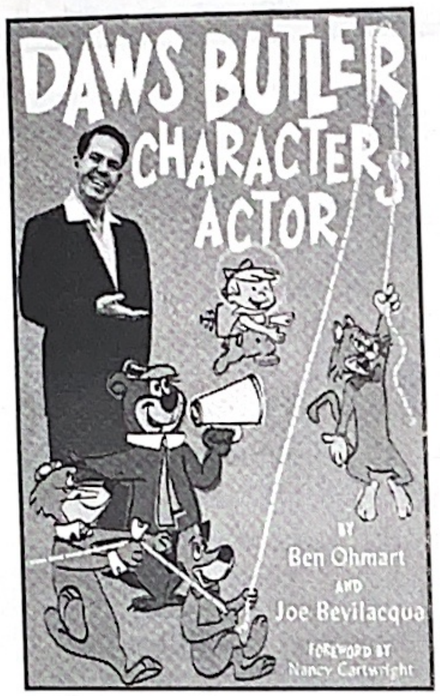
Web site: *http://www.ninapaley.com/*

Brooklyn-based animator/cartoonist Nina Paley built her reputation on festival films like "The Stork" (2003 Sundance selection) and several internationally syndicated comic strips. Yet this lifetime of artistic labor is upstaged by the 45 minutes she spent on "The Jerry Springer Show" in 1997. This November 7th Nina presents a retrospective of her animation, along with the embarrassing-yet-legendary "I Want to Join a Suicide Cult!" Springer episode. Marvel at the 2,000 hand-drawn frames of "Pandorama," the shifting optical illusions of "Fetch!," the dazzling design of "The Sitayana" - then spend the entire Q & A asking about Springer.

Nina Paley
Cartoonist, Animator, Illustrator

Come to the FREE figure drawing classes at SVA

FREE for ASIFA members and students
Thursday nights, from 7:00-9:30 pm.
Contact *tysent@hotmail.com* for location.



Daws Butler: Character's Actor Coming November 16th

Voice actor, NPR reporter, historian, and comedy enthusiast Joe Bevilacqua has published an authorized biography, co authored with historian Ben Ohmart, about the enormously talented **Daws Butler**. Mr. Butler was the voice of **Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound, Cap'n Crunch** and hundreds of others.

This can also be viewed at www.asifaeast.com

Updated,
Informative & Fun
www.asifaeast.com

ASIFA-EAST

The Nicktoons Film Festival

My first job on an animated film (composing and producing the soundtrack) came right out of college, when my friend Alan Goodman introduced me to David Bruce, a student filmmaker. I was hooked.

Looking back over the 1000 films since (commercials and network identifications for MTV, Nickelodeon, Lifetime, and Comedy Central, cartoons for Hanna-Barbera, Nickelodeon, and Frederator) it occurred to me that most of the filmmakers were virtually first-timers, and the thrill of discovery was a great part of the excitement.

That's why it was a dream come true for Frederator Studios to create a brand new film festival for the wildly successful new Nicktoons digital channel.

The Nicktoons Film Festival has its first week's screening Sunday night at 10pm EST.

The festival has received an overwhelming response from filmmakers all around the world. We received over 400 films, and festival programmers Eric Homan and Rita Street guided our co-producers from Animation Magazine to narrow the field to almost 100 animations. Over the next 4 months our esteemed judges Gabor Csupo, John Kricfalusi, and Eric Goldberg will pick the $10,000 Grand Prize Winner.

I hope you enjoy discovering these new animated filmmakers as much as we do (and if you're convinced one of them's going to be a big hit, let me know so we can sign them up).

Fred Seibert

Among the films airing will be David B. Levy and Dale Clowdis' *Scout Says*, which has been selected to appear in the third epsiode of the Nicktoons Film Festival, airing on Nicktoons Sunday, November 7th, at 10:00pm (ET) / 7:00pm (PT).

Encore presentations to catch the third episode include:

Monday, 11/8, at 1:00am (ET)
Monday, 11/8, at 10:00pm (ET)
Tuesday, 11/9, at 1:00am (ET)

David B. Levy and Dale Clowdis' *Scout Says*

Teaching Position Available

Two Year Visiting Faculty Position with possible renewal - Computer Animation. Beginning August 2005 - Carnegie Mellon University School of Art.

The School of Art at Carnegie Mellon University is seeking to fill one full-time visiting faculty position in computer animation, pending funding.

We are seeking an enthusiastic individual working in computer animation with experience using Maya Software in some or all of the following areas:

3-D animation, 3-D, modeling, mapping, MEL scripting, lighting, character rigging, and/or motion capture. Artists with expertise in computer animation and additional experience in other electronic or visual media are also encouraged. Candidates with conceptual strengths, contextual sensibilities, and/or a multidisciplinary orientation are sought to teach freshman through graduate students and work with a dynamic faculty team within an established electronic time based area in the School of Art.

Qualifications: Advanced Degree or equivalent. University level teaching experience beyond teaching assistantships. A versatile artist with a significant digital/electronic, time based media art background and exhibition record. Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer, women and minorities encouraged to apply.

Appointment Levels: Visiting Assistant Professor. Position beginning late August, 2005.

Salary & Benefits: Nationally competitive and commensurate with experience.

Additional Programmatic Information: *http://artserver.cfa.cmu.edu*

Applications To Include:

- Letter of application with teaching philosophy.
- Curriculum Vitae
- Names/addresses / telephone numbers of 3 references (no recommendation letters,)
- Documentation of artwork: Up to 10 minutes of applicants animated work(VHS or DVD.) No student work.
- Self-addressed stamped envelope for return of materials.

Send to:
ETB Faculty Search
School of Art
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890

Application Deadline: February 1, 2005.

This can also be viewed at www.asifaeast.com

The ASIFA-East Story

By Howard Beckerman

The jewel of the New York ASIFA-East chapter is its animation festival, now in its 35th successive year. Since many animation festivals are held in alternate years, this might be the longest running animation festival in the world. It appeals to professional and novice alike-no preselection committee to eliminate films-and is casual enough for students and veteran animators to mingle, discuss and toast the subject they love best-animation.

The festival premiered in 1969, four years after ASIFA-East began as a chapter of the Association Internationale du'Film D'Animation when Pierre Barbin, then president of the Association, came to New York to announce ASIFA-East's formation. In Europe ASIFA served as a magnet for drawing individual animators together to share their work and experiences. There might have been fifteen animators in one city, forty in another or just one or two in certain places, but with the expansion to North America where many animators worked in several cities, required a different approach. The solution was to create regional chapters, each unit with a 10 member minimum, and its activities strictly not-for-profit. The result was ASIFA-East and ASIFA-West, which later became ASIFA-Hollywood and was followed in a few years by chapters in other cities scattered across the continent.

Memory has faded for most of us about the very beginnings of ASIFA-East, but what I recall is that ASIFA President Barbin's 1965 visit was celebrated with a large gathering at the Huntington Hartford Museum at New York's Columbus Circle. This narrow structure, an icon of the Modern Movement designed by architect Edward Durrell Stone and which had opened only a year before, had at least one ample room where the local animators convened. I remember that John Hubley, former president of ASIFA, was there as was prominent film critic Stanley Kaufman. The gathering was noisy and, well, not surprising-animated. At some point we were invited to the museum's theater, where a handful of French independent black-and-white shorts were shown-none of which were animated. I've never figured that one out. What does linger in recollection about the evening was the clutch of animators and designers that grouped at the bar laughing and grousing about the lack of appreciation on the part of advertising agencies and the world in general, even as a new chapter championing worldwide animation was being shaped.

The preoccupation of animators in New York in the 1960s was TV commercials. Though the midtown based Paramount Cartoons was still churning out shorts for theaters and Terrytoons, just north of the city in New Rochelle, was still bustling with cartoon productions for kids' television, the real thrust of the forty or so small studios in the area was to satisfy the demands of Madison Avenue. A snapshot of that period in animation history would show that former Disney, Lantz, Warner Bros., MGM, Fleischer and Terrytoons staffers were applying their skills to the sell-

ing of cars, soaps and beers. Independent animators were rare at that time because of a lack of outlets. The existing film festivals that dotted the globe were predominantly live-action events that gave an occasional nod toward frame-by-frame productions. The Annecy Festival, begun in 1960, was the lone exception. Yet, with the release of The Yellow Submarine in 1968, independent animation took an inspired turn. A generation of young animators were suddenly and impetuously motivated to do their own thing, emulating the film's graphic brilliance as well as the Beatles' lighthearted antics. By the 1970s, this new breed fed the growing attendance at film schools and contributed their efforts to emerging festivals devoted strictly to animation.

The animators in New York worked under the aegis of the Screen Cartoonists Guild whose business agent, Pepe Ruiz, saw that accepting ASIFA would be a welcome experience for local animators. The first official mailing address for the new chapter was the union office at 15 West 47th Street in the heart of Manhattan's Diamond District. Ruiz, with the blessing of the union membership, sent Optical House director Dick Rauh and designer Hal Silvermintz as delegates to Annecy in 1965.

In almost 40 years of existence, there have been only four ASIFA-East presidents: Shamus Culhane, Dick Rauh, (who also served on the international board of directors) , Linda Simensky and the present holder of that office, David Levy. Culhane in his initial directive, dated June 3, 1966, informed the animation community that, "At long last, a much needed branch of the International Animation organization ASIFA is being formed here. It is to be called ASIFA-EAST." He hopefully suggests that, " It (ASIFA-East) would provide a center for information on international film festivals, as well as organize such festivals here in New York." As always, in the fluctuating New York commercial field, it was hoped that ASIFA would generate business or, as Culhane states, "Ultimately. it will open up animation here, and allow it to share in the renaissance and increased interest that film is enjoying now." The first ASIFA-East screening took place on the evening of the following June 20th.

In the years since, monthly screenings and lectures have been held in varied locations, and if projection facilities were unavailable we would pack and shlep our Bell and Howell projectors along with our enthusiasm to such diverse locations as commercial screening rooms, hotel conference units, the back rooms of Schraffts' restaurants, The Society of Illustrators, the cozy theater seats at the Museum of Modern Art or the Donnell Branch of the New York Public Library. It was at schools and colleges where we found the most sympathetic acceptance. Included among these have been: Phoenix School of Design, New York University, New School University, Parsons School of Design and School of Visual Arts.

A circle of informal diehard ASIFA-East members-the board-selects the monthly screenings. All of the chapter's 400 diverse members are welcome at these joking and punning sessions where ideas are tossed about and the newsletter is stapled and stamped for mailing. At a similar circle in late1968, animator Pete Dekas suggested that we create a film festival, This idea satisfied the group's search for a signature

event to distinguish ASIFA-East from the other chapters. The immediate concern was whether there would be any response to the invitation to submit films. Well, not too worry, reels of 16-millimeter film began arriving through the mails.

From the very beginning it had been decided that all ASIFA-East members in good standing would be eligible to vote on the entries, but one evening, the anxious board plucked two short films at random from the growing stack and screened them to test the caliber of the submissions. The films were funny and interesting and, miracle of miracles, the festival was on its way. Through the years the event proved to be an excellent outlet for students and independents to exhibit their work without intimidation. The first film to win Best in Show was a 30 second Sparklettesdesert comercial by the studio Stars & Stripes productions Forever Inc. Tissa David recalls that telegrams were sent toall the winners requesting thire presence on award night. A touch of grandeur that was never repeated.

Winning entries for which this was their first exposure, often collected honors at other events. At least six entries found their way to Academy Award nominations, two of which received Oscars for best animated short subject: Frank Film by Frank Mouris in 1973 and Sundae in New York by Jimmy Picker in 1983.

In the early years the winning films or videos were mostly commercials, then there were years when films for children dominated. With the increased demand for animated shows for cable, offbeat, edgy and nervy shorts took prizes. There were also the clever videos that became pilots for TV series. Along side these more obvious examples there have always been very personal animated films that revealed unique visions and approaches. In the end, we owe thanks to good old Pete Dekas,who was on the money when he suggested the creation of a film festival. Ironically, many years back, a winning film of his was shown accidentally upside down and when rewound-was projected backwards,

As ASIFA-East president David Levy remarks, " The festival has been our cornerstone event. It's been a constant. In this day and age of home video, digital cable, and the internet, ASIFA-East brings live bodies together through the festival as well as at monthly, one-of-a kind screenings, lectures and events. Not only are we a device by which students can plug into the industry, we serve as the glue of the community itself. Friendships, partnerships, and businesses have been sparked from the ASIFA-East connection."

It's safe to say that ASIFA-East, closing in on 40 casual, laid back years in operation and 35 years of friendly sponsorship of its popular film festival, will go on forever.

Howard Beckerman, animator, and teacher, has been with ASIFA-East since its inception. He was a vice-president of ASIFA-International and is author of the well received Animation The Whole Story. In writing this article he would like to thank Dick Rauh, Vinnie Caferelli and Tissa David for sharing their early memories of ASIFA-East and Linda Simensky, Michael Sporn and David Levy for their assistance.

Animation Divided?

By Jim Mortensen

It's a wonderful time for Animation. Traditional animators get to complain about Flash taking over the industry. Flash animators get to scream about 3D taking over Television (Father of the Pride, potential Shrek). 3D animators can worry about Machinima catching up in production value and stealing a large market share, and Machinima filmmakers are just struggling for acceptance. It's beautiful when we can all worry about another medium coming to dominate over our own; it means our animation gigs are at least putting food on the table to let us worry about the future.

Looking at this year's productions, opportunities exist in every medium: Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends is one of the best animated shows ever, The Incredibles is about to become a blockbuster, Machinima is on the cusp of coming into its own with MTV's Video Mods and Rooster Teeth's new online show The Strangerhood, and rumors are aBoundin' of a PIXAR 2D feature. Animators are crossing over from medium to medium, yet still there seems to be the perception of an us vs. them mentality. Is there an innate, combatative "rift" between animators of the mediums?

Ottawa 2004 brought up some big issues, specifically in the Machinima community, about the perception of these "rifts". Machinima, which is basically 3D filmmaking using game engines, is an incredibly technical and limiting artform to work in. Picture making 3D puppetshow with sets and marionettes with potential to "crash reality", and you have an inkling of what it's like. Machinima is a cheap but difficult medium to work in, and Ottawa was to recognize it for the first time in its' competition. Five films were up for an award, none of them won. Not one film.

The Machinima community cried foul, Chris Robinson tried to explain himself on the M.com forums and was flamed by some members, hoopla ensued with the result of a bad experience in general. The notion that traditional animators can't or are reluctant to accept Machinima films as art was tossed around. Maybe Ottawa's collective fear of Machinima driving stakes into both 2D & 3D's coffins made them take a hostile attitude towards Machinima? I don't buy it.

Regardless of the medium that we choose to work in as artists, we all have the potential to make something that is entertaining to creative professionals and cold audiences alike. That, after all, is the purpose of making films: to entertain. While I may enjoy a bad-but-well-drawn film more than a bad-but-technically-amazing Machinima film, I can't accept either of them as being good if they don't entertain. Be it Machinima, 2D, 3D, Flash or animated sand grains, a commercial is good if it entertains and sells the product. Whatever medium will accomplish the main goal for a project is best.

I truly believe that if you are good at what you do, passionate enough to get through the rough spots and interested enough in learning anything new (even if not necessarily using new technologies) you can eek out a decent living. While 2D animators might be battling 3D animators and Machinima animators for broadcast dollars, we're all pushing for animation to succeed as a whole and for each other to make good work. I like my medium, you like your medium, our films will battle it out in a cagematch called

Ottawa. Personally, my films weren't good enough to even get in. "Ottawa 2004 vs. Machinima" came down to the works not being good enough. Come graduation, it may come down to me not being able to draw well enough. Oh well, keep trying and we'll all make it. There's no reason for fear, no reason to get angry at Ottawa. Lets all go home, destroy the self-fulfilling prophecy of a "rift" and make some good stuff. Life'll work itself out in the meantime.

There's a poster at the UCB Theatre that says "Keep worrying about the future and it will come." I can't agree more.

Jim Mortensen is an SVA thesis-year student who enjoys a good argument but at the end of the day is just lookin for good friends.

Nothing Comes Between Me and My DVDs

By David B. Levy

Ever since Howard Beckerman assigned our SVA History of Animation class to buy the book, Of Mice and Magic by Leonard Maltin, I've been an addict. My book has long lost its cover and the last bit of glue holding the spine is about to give way. I think this is the first book I've read and re-read to near extinction. Although the first edition of this book hit the shelves in the mid 1980s, it still remains the only published (and available) history on Terrytoons, Famous Studios, Columbia, UPA, Van Bueren, Lantz, and MGM. If this book has long occupied the same place on your shelf, it might be time to dust it off. New DVD collections such as The Tom and Jerry Spotlight Collection, The Looney Toons Golden Collection Vol. 1 & 2, the multi-volume Columbia House Woody Woodpecker and Friends join the long-available Iwerks and VanBuren "Cartoons That Time Forgot" Collections. Unfortunately, you need to head underground to get cartoons from Terrytoons and Fleischer/Famous studios. My favorite source for DVD bootlegs is ebay.

At a recent SVA premiere event of Pixar's The Incredibles, director Brad Bird spoke about the fact that we now have 100 years of animation available to us. He warned that we shouldn't rely on it, exclusively, when looking for reference on characterization. The makers of classic animation used vaudeville, silent comedies, and their own observations to create the gold standard of character animation we envy today. Bird added that if one was going to animate an older character, they shouldn't look at the old fairies in Sleeping Beauty...instead, they should make fresh observations at a nursing home or sit in the park and learn from life.

I use my animation library as a historical (sometimes hysterical) tool. I want to see what's been done before. I want to know who my heroes are. I'm interested in the origins of the craft and how the principals of animation developed and spread across an industry. I don't think one can understand where we are today without reaching back to the past. As my collection grows I find I rely on Maltin less and less (sorry, Lenny). The risk in following Maltin would be the same as following the NY Times or Fox news for all your headline news. You get a bias or spin. The trick is to amass lots of perspectives. In doing so, you get to discover that the most relevant perspective becomes your own.

ASIFA East
c/o Michael Sporn Animation, Inc.
35 Bedford Street
NYC, NY 10014

ASIFA East Presents
A Flash TV Production Panel discussion

Flash animation has been making a splash from the computer screen to the TV screen.
Join us as representatives from such NY studios as Curious Pictures, Spike TV, Funny Garbage, and Mishmash Media discuss and compare methods of Flash TV production. Flash animation clips will be screened. Job opportunities in Flash will be discussed. Q and A with the audience will follow.

Wednesday, November 17 at 7:00 p.m.
SVA, 209 East 23rd Street - Room 502
Admission: FREE